

December 4, 2003

Attachment 4

Michael Silverman  
Pacific Technologies, Inc.  
14711 NE 29<sup>th</sup> Place, Ste 216  
Bellevue, WA 98007

RE: PTI Draft Report on North Dakota Information Technology Services

Dear Mr. Silverman:

This letter is in response to your request for comments on the draft report prepared by Pacific Technologies, Inc. recommending a path for future development of information services delivery in North Dakota. After your last presentation to the Information Technology Advisory Committee on November 18, I provided a copy of that draft report to our Director of Technology. The following are our comments as well as his analysis of your report and recommendations.

At the outset, I must underscore that the judiciary prides itself in having taken a leadership role in providing the efficient delivery of technology services to the 53 clerks of district court, district judges, selected municipalities, and other justice agencies that have a need to access our data bases. The attached document prepared by Kurt Schmidt, our Director of Technology, outlines, in detail, those initiatives. Not only have we provided leadership in the area of information system development for the judiciary, but we have worked hand in hand with the executive branch in implementing cost-saving strategies and adopting best practices in the area of software acquisition and development, hardware acquisition, and support services delivery.

There are many aspects of the report we support and with which we agree. However, the recommendation to move the resources for our information technology help desk, desktop support services, and server support to the executive branch is a recommendation that we cannot support. Our mission is to deliver the highest quality services on behalf of this branch of government. To allow these services to be provided by an executive branch agency, would not be in the best interests of the judiciary, nor would it serve the best interests of our citizens.

I do not agree that provision of these services is similar to the public utilities model presented at the committee meeting. The delivery of technology services and the support of our Unified Court Information System, as well as the support of other modules, directly bears on the ability of the judiciary to get its work done and, as a result, has direct implications for judicial policy development and implementation.

Michael Silverman  
December 4, 2003  
Page 2

Technology services and the way we organize our resources in the future will more and more come to rely on the internet and will affect how we provide these services to court personnel, judges, and the general public. Technology services and how these services are organized are of a significant enough nature that they must remain under the direct control and supervision of the judiciary, not an executive branch agency.

As we have demonstrated, we have worked collaboratively with the executive branch in implementing best practices wherever possible, yet maintaining our independence as a co-equal branch of government. The proposals that have been advanced are not cost-effective, nor in our best interest. As a result, I am again urging you to rethink your report's proposal that directly bears on the transfer of judicial branch technology services and personnel to the executive branch.

Sincerely,

Ted Gladden  
State Court Administrator

TG/rb

Attachment

cc: Interim Committee on Information Technology  
Curt Wolfe  
Jim Smith  
Roxanne Woeste